Inejiro Asanuma's Last Speech (12 October 1960 - Hibiya Public Hall, Tokyo)

- Delivered on 12 October 1960 at Hibiya Public Hall during the three-party leaders' joint speech meeting ahead of the general election.
- The speech was interrupted mid-sentence by Asanuma's assassination.

Comrades, the extraordinary session of the Diet is finally set to convene on the 17th. I believe this session will be a dissolution Diet intended to take national measures regarding the revision of the Security Treaty. Ahead of this dissolution and general election, NHK, the Election Administration Commission, and even the Clean Election Alliance have sponsored this gathering of representatives from the Liberal Democratic, Socialist, and Democratic Socialist Parties to express their attitudes toward the election. I consider this a truly excellent opportunity and express my gratitude.

Now, I would like to state the Socialist Party's views.

Comrades, I believe the essence of politics is to straighten what is crooked in the nation and society, to correct what is unjust, and to restore what is unnatural to its natural state. However, in our country today, there are many crooked, unjust, and unnatural things. I will raise some of the major issues among them, criticize the government's policies, and clarify the Socialist Party's position.

First, even as the Ikeda Cabinet touts income doubling, prices are rising sharply right under its feet. Everyone understands that if salaries double but prices triple, actual living standards will decline. The Ikeda Cabinet bases its economic policy on a 9% growth rate for the Japanese economy to achieve income doubling. This contains many problems. After the war, through the hard labor of the working masses, mining and industrial production finally tripled compared to prewar levels, but what has become of the masses' lives? Has social anxiety been resolved? Has the disparity between rich and poor — the so-called dual structure of the economy — been solved? Almost none of these have been addressed. Even Kōno Ichirō of the Liberal Democratic Party has stated that beneath the surface prosperity lies profound social anxiety. Even if, under the Ikeda Cabinet, the economy doubles in ten years, I believe social anxiety and livelihood insecurity will not be resolved. For example, next year trade liberalization will fully accelerate to 70% completion. As a result, soybean prices are crashing in Hokkaido, and small and medium subcontracting factories are suffering from unit price reductions. According to announcements by Ministry of International Trade and Industry bureaucrats, trade liberalization will lead to 1.37 million unemployed workers in mining and manufacturing. This is far from income doubling. Now, the Japanese people are increasingly anxious that price doubling will come before income doubling. Moreover, Prime Minister Ikeda has stated that to rationalize rural areas, 60% of small farmers must be driven from their villages — in other words, abandoning small farmers. If six million or more unemployed emerge from rural areas as a result, what on earth will happen? They say "talking about next year makes demons laugh," but in this case, even demons couldn't laugh.

To determine prices, as well as issues of finance, fiscal investment and loans, it is natural that

representatives of the working masses should participate, and under planned economics, we need to greatly advance the improvement, cooperation, and modernization of agriculture and small and medium enterprises to establish economic policy. The government has announced that this fiscal year's natural revenue increase is 210 billion yen, and next year's is 250 billion. This "natural revenue increase" simply means excess taxation. The money the people have earned through hard labor is being excessively siphoned off as taxes. Prime Minister Ikeda boasts that he can produce a tax reduction plan in one night as if it were his own achievement, but the natural revenue increase is not the government's merit — it is the fruit of the people's labor. (Applause) Therefore, it is only natural to return it to the people. Furthermore, it is said that four years from now, the rearmament reinforcement plan will double to 300 billion yen.

Our Socialist Party asserts that this should be halted, and such finances should be used for the peaceful lives of the people, for genuine social security and tax reductions. (Applause)

Prime Minister Ikeda says that investment increases production, production increases income, income increases savings, and savings increase investment again — a circular argument. If capitalist economics truly moved by such circular logic, there would be no recessions, no panics, no layoffs, no wage cuts. However — however, what is the reality? In the fifteen postwar years, there have been three recessions. Why does this happen? Because production has increased, but the income of the working masses has not risen accordingly, leading to goods not selling. Therefore, to truly expand the economy, policies to increase the income of the working masses — such as social security and tax reductions — must be actively implemented.

Recently, the government's social security and tax reductions have shrunk compared to initial promises, while public investment that benefits big capitalists has ballooned. If such policies continue, who can guarantee that recession will not come? Prime Minister Ikeda says resources can be created, but resources are the natural revenue increase from taxation. The Japan Socialist Party considers not only natural revenue increase but genuine resources for social security and tax reductions.

One is to amend the special tax measures law that favors only large corporations and collect more taxes from them. (Applause)

I would like to touch on one point: the National Pension Law to be implemented from April 1 next year. The government is preparing for it: from age 20, 100 yen; from age 35, 150 yen until age 59, accumulated with 5.5% compound interest to over 260,000 yen, then from age 65, 3,500 yen per month. This means receiving back one's own savings — I think this is more a form of

social insurance than social security. Moreover, it ends upon death, containing many problems. The Socialist Party asserts that premiums should be based on income, that national pension operations should be borne by the state, and accumulated funds used for the welfare of working people. Therefore, we strongly assert that implementation should be postponed one or two years to make it truly substantial.

Second is the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty issue. With dissolution and general election approaching, the sovereign people will express their will on the Security Treaty. The significance of this election is truly grave. U.S. forces have been stationed in Japan for fifteen years, including the occupation period, and the treaty revision extends it another ten years. Foreign troops stationed for twenty-five years is an unnatural event since Japan's founding. India's Nehru said, "We do not like foreign bases. Having foreign bases in one's country is like having foreign power in one's heart, always carrying the smell of war." We feel exactly the same. (Applause)

The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was signed on the same day as the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. Since then, Japan has provided military bases to the U.S., and the U.S. has stationed troops in Japan. Japan underwent great transformation after the war. As stated in the Constitution's preamble, to prevent war again through government action. First is popular sovereignty. Second is freedom of speech, assembly, association, workers' right to organize, collective bargaining, and strike. Third is Article 9: renunciation of war as a means of settling international disputes, no maintenance of land, sea, air forces or other war potential, no recognition of belligerent rights. This decision meant Japan could not rearm, provide bases to other countries, or form military alliances. However, the Security Treaty has left major problems. The bases Japan provided to the U.S. are like U.S. enclaves. Japanese jurisdiction does not extend inside them; crimes committed there cannot be tried by Japan. (Applause)

If someone committing a crime on Japanese soil flees into a base, nothing can be done. It is truly extraterritorial. (Applause)

This is not the appearance of a fully independent Japan. At the time of conclusion, there were 730 locations, the size of Shikoku. Even now, there are 260 locations, plus 90 water areas. This is not the appearance of complete Japanese independence. (Applause)

Furthermore, this shows Japan's military subordination to the U.S., which is no exaggeration. (Applause)

Moreover, to expand these bases, Japanese fight Japanese with blood — for example, Tachikawa Airfield is now a U.S. base; to expand it, they try to take farmers' land in Sunagawa. Farmers resist, procurement officials call police to suppress them. Behind the farmers are the people seeking full independence supporting them. Thus, they glare at each other and spill blood — Japan's independence requires Japanese to spill blood to expand U.S. enclaves. This is a contradictory independence, no exaggeration. (Applause)

Therefore, for Japan to become a fully independent nation, U.S. troops must leave, bases returned, and an active neutral policy pursued as the basis of Japanese diplomacy. However, under the Kishi Cabinet, the treaty was revised, and this spring's regular Diet session ratified it through Liberal Democratic single-party deliberation and dictatorship. This turned Japan-U.S. relations into a mutual defense treaty, increasing the danger of war.

Furthermore, Japan assumed the obligation to expand and strengthen defense power toward the U.S., leading to tax increases oppressing livelihoods and restricting speech, assembly, and association freedoms. (Applause)

We are also deeply concerned that defense expansion could lead to constitutional revision, rearmament, and conscription. Moreover, defense expansion is to be consulted between Japan and the U.S., so one misstep could bring U.S. interference in internal affairs. In any case, we believe military relations with the U.S. should be severed now. Simultaneously, military relations with China and the Soviet Union against Japan should also be demanded severed. Then, Japan, the U.S., the Soviet Union, and China — four nations spanning both camps — should form a new security framework as the basis of Japanese diplomacy. (Applause)

Comrades, another root is mutual respect for independence, territory, no interference in internal affairs, no aggression, on the basis of mutual benefit and equality, forming a new security framework. In a sense, through this election, we will appeal to the people about the dangers of the Security Treaty. Though the Diet is in that state, the sovereign people must express their correct position on the Security Treaty through voting — that is the sovereign's duty.

Third is Japan-China relations. Japan fought five wars in the last fifty years before World War II ended, mainly in China and Korea. The damage Japan inflicted on China since the Manchurian Incident is said to be ten million lives and fifty billion dollars in property. Relations with China, which suffered so much, remain formally in a state of war. This must be corrected. Currently, there is a Japan-Taiwan peace treaty, but thinking this normalizes relations with China — nearly one billion people — is extremely unreasonable. We must consider China as one, Taiwan as

part of China. (Applause)

Therefore, normalizing diplomatic relations with China as soon as possible is a major issue for Japanese diplomacy. Yet the Ikeda Cabinet clings to the Taiwan government treaty and votes against China's representation in the UN, following the U.S. This is truly regrettable. When we look at the current UN situation, neutral tendencies like ours are rising. (Applause)

If Japan ignores neutralism in Asia and Africa and pursues U.S.-following diplomacy, it will become an orphan in Asia — I can say this clearly. (Applause)

Comrades, recently China has said it is willing to conclude trade agreements at the government level. Prime Minister Ikeda says trade with the communist bloc is deceptive. What does it mean for a prime minister to say such things? Ikeda says he wants Japan to be respected by the communist bloc. This will not lead to respect — it may lead to contempt. It is truly regrettable. Even within the Liberal Democratic Party, there are people like Ishibashi Tanzan and Matsumura Kenzō with common sense and good foresight. (Applause)

When Hatoyama's cabinet normalized Japan-Soviet relations, there was much opposition in conservative circles. The Socialist Party actively supported it. If there are people in conservative circles hoping to normalize relations with China, we will support them across party lines without hesitation. (Applause)

Fourth is the state of parliamentary politics. In recent years, Diet deliberations have sometimes become chaotic, even requiring police introduction to pass bills. We must consider why such violent and abnormal situations occur. In Diet deliberations, the Socialist Party approves about 80% of bills submitted by the government and Liberal Democratic Party. We oppose bills that greatly affect Japan's peace and democracy, such as the Police Duties Execution Law and the new Security Treaty. Most of our opposition is to bills that violate the Constitution. If the Socialist Party had not seriously opposed these, Japan's rearmament would have advanced further, constitutional revision and conscription would have come, and livelihoods and rights would have been trampled. (Applause)

Comrades, the major issue in parliamentary politics is that major bills like the Police Duties Law and new Security Treaty are not asked of the people during elections — they say nothing unpopular then, but once they have a majority after election, they push through what they did not promise. This is where the big problem lies. (Applause. Chamber uproar)

<Moderator> The venue is very noisy, and I think it is hard for those who want to hear the speech to hear. Most of the front row is press for coverage, but there is no room for coverage due to the noise. Please be quiet so we can hear the speech and proceed. (Applause) Thank you for waiting — please continue.

(Chairman Asanuma resumes) During the election, unpopular policies are all concealed, and once a majority is secured in the election—

(At this point, a thug [Otoya Yamaguchi] rushes up and stabs Chairman Asanuma. Chamber uproar)

<The following is the original draft of the final part of the speech that Asanuma intended to continue but did not due to the assassination>

—whatever absurd things they do, pushing through with Diet majority — what is the point of elections or the Diet? This would be the majority party digging its own grave for parliamentary politics.

For example, regarding the new Security Treaty, before signing, they should have dissolved the House of Representatives and asked the sovereign people. But they did not. On May 19 and 20, police were introduced into the Diet, and the Security Treaty revision bill was passed by Liberal Democratic single-party deliberation and forced vote. In response, the people rose, demanding dissolution and general election to ask the sovereign's judgment, as forced passage would ignore the great principle of parliamentaryism in the Constitution, so twenty million petitions demanded dissolution to hear the sovereign's will. Yet it passed single-party deliberation in the House of Councillors and natural passage, leading to ratification exchange. Thus, Japanese parliamentary politics died on May 19 and 20 — no exaggeration. Such single-party deliberation and one-party dictatorship must be reformed. Creating accomplished facts and then dissolving now is too late. Our Socialist Party asserts that major bills greatly affecting Japan's independence, peace, and democracy — with significant public opposition — should, as is common in other countries, be put to general election to ask the people's approval or disapproval. If the Socialist Party takes power, we pledge to always execute this. Parliamentary politics is the government and opposition clashing on the Diet ring, debating sharply to seek development. For this, the Constitution, Diet Law, House of Representatives rules, and precedents must be respected. The Japan Socialist Party will act accordingly.

Finally, I would like to say that current Japanese politics is money politics, plutocracy. This injustice must be corrected. Currently, our politics involves enormous money in elections; once elected, they seek interests to recover it, sometimes activating command authority. Those collecting much money become president, and the president becomes prime minister. Politics moved by money leads to a society full of money-ism, without hope or ideals, with day-to-day survival attitudes prevailing. Compared to prewar, crime cases have increased tenfold or more, especially youth problems becoming worries for parents with children. The government talks about moral education or amending the Basic Education Law, but what is needed more is to correct the fundamental distortion of politics.

The government itself ignores the Constitution to push rearmament, recently even trying to introduce weapons usable with nuclear warheads, while telling the people to obey the law and collecting taxes relentlessly. Under this, the people cannot remain silent forever.

The basis for correcting politics is for the government itself to obey the Constitution, conduct clean politics. Then, provide hopeful lives for youth, workplaces for those who want to work, stable lives for the elderly — such policies must be implemented. If the Japan Socialist Party takes power, we promise to execute these policies. To conclude, the biggest immediate issues after the general election are, first, normalizing relations with China, and second, defending the Constitution. Achieving this is impossible under the Ikeda Cabinet. Only a constitutional defense, democratic, neutral government centered on the Socialist Party and gathering conscientious politicians can execute this.

I earnestly hope for your active support.